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# FEVR FLASH

## EASTERN NEBRASKA CHAPTER

### NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1835 N. SOMERS, FREMONT, NE 68025      MAY, 2003

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#### POINTS OF CONTACT:

**Eastern Nebraska Chapter and Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad (FEVR)** - (402-727-0615) - 1835 N. Somers, Fremont, NE 68025 ([www.fremontrailroad.com](http://www.fremontrailroad.com))

**Fremont Dinner Train** (402-727-8321 or 1-800-942-7245) - 650 N. H St., Fremont, NE 68025 (The Fremont Dinner Train is a separate business for which the FEVR provides motive power and trackage).

#### THOMAS:

**Day Out With Thomas™** will be in Fremont **May 30-June 1 and June 6-8** with train rides, games, entertainment, and gift shop! Final preparations are being carried out. The new boarding area concrete walk is in place to provide more convenient boarding. A new "bumper" has been installed at the end of the boarding track. In case Thomas wants to become "naughty" this will make him stop where he should!

Tickets may be obtained by link from the Internet website [www.fremontrailroad.com](http://www.fremontrailroad.com) or by calling toll-free **1-866-468-7624**, 9AM-8PM CST, Monday through Saturday, and 9AM- 7 PM Sunday. Tickets may also be obtained **locally** at the Depot- call there for times and dates.

#### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers are needed to assist with the community event- set up crews, greeters, ticket takers, train attendants, story tellers, maintenance- all to help accommodate the thousands of visitors (15000 last year!). Contact event coordinator **Bobbi Jo Lang** at **402-933-6435** or at [fevr@radiks.net](mailto:fevr@radiks.net).

#### AND AFTER THAT:

Only about a month after, on **July 11,12, and 13**, the railroad will be offering multiple excursion trips as part of the **John C. Fremont Days** activities. This annual community celebration honors the famous explorer.

#### APRIL FLASH?

If you received the April issue recently in May- it was not the fault of the mail system. The busy season with the start of the excursions, the school charters, and the preparations for Thomas kept our volunteer staff not only carrying out the office duties, but also supervising and riding with the charters. This left little opportunity for the final steps in getting the over 300 copies of the FLASH mailed.

#### FLOOD:

Heavy rains in the Maple Creek watershed several weeks ago once again caused some flooding of the roadbed north of Nickerson. This usually shallow creek drains a large area and has an "S" bend near the tracks. Three floods occurred in the same area in 1996. Post-flood inspection revealed some places needing attention and so passenger travel is limited to Nickerson in the interim while repairs are underway.

#### EXCURSION UPDATE:

The regular excursion travel season is in progress. The air conditioned ex-Milwaukee car has provided added accommodation when needed and has performed well..

Both **Saturday** and **Sunday** trips are scheduled for boarding at **1:00 PM** at the Depot with departure on the mainline at 1:30 PM. As mentioned above, both trips temporarily go to and return from **Nickerson**. The 15 mile round-trip returns about 3:30 PM. Shopping time at the antique store in Nickerson is an option.

Contact the FEVR office for excursion brochures.

Scheduled **charter** travel has been completed for the Spring. Additional reservations for Summer and Fall travel are available. To secure information for schools or other charter travel, contact **Mr. Gene Zimmerman, Office Manager**, at the FEVR office.

#### RAIL SCHOOL:

In each issue, some facet of information about railroad operations is featured. This time, **railroad signaling** at grade crossings continues as the topic.

**Passive signals-** stop signs, the traditional "crossbucks" - need only minimal maintenance and no power or control. But **Active signals-** lights, gate arms, bells, horns, "wig-wags" all need a control system.

The method of controlling an active signal by having a battery supply current to the steel rails to keep the signal "off" was presented in the last issue. When the steel wheels of a train roll on the affected rails, the current is shorted and the signal operates.

This system typically consists of track **"approaches"** to the crossing on both sides and an **"island"** in the actual crossing area. When the train enters the approach rails, the signal operates. Circuits in the signal control detect the direction of the train through the crossing and when the train leaves the island area, the signals turn off. This prevents signal operation when the train is still departing in the approach entered from the island.

This system is simple and proven but has several **disadvantages**. The most important disadvantage is the fixed length of the approaches where the train activates the signal. A **fast train** will not give adequate warning time. A very **slow or stopped** train will operate the signals for an overly long time and motorists may become impatient and cross the tracks. This is an extremely **dangerous** situation for a multiple track crossing where a train may come by on another track.

Another disadvantage is the need for a remote **current** source- typically a battery- at the far ends of the approaches. These need maintenance and periodic replacement. Some solutions and other systems next issue.



**RAILSCENE:** He's back in town! Thomas™ (shown coming to the depot with his train last year) is back again - May 30-June 1 and June 6-8 - he is looking forward to having you ride on his train. Ticket and more information inside this issue.

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